

District receives protection

House lawmakers agree to keep Armes' area intact

BY JOHN GUIDROZ

AMERICAN PRESS

BATON ROUGE — After some contention, House lawmakers agreed Tuesday on a plan that protects district boundaries for Rep. James Armes, D-Leesville, and Rep. Frank Howard, R-Many.

Lawmakers are required to redraw district boundaries every 10 years based on results from the U.S. census,

The House unanimously approved an amendment drafted by Rep. Herbert Dixon, D-Alexandria. It now heads to the Senate for approval.

The amendment keeps Armes in District 30, which includes 13,279 people in Beauregard Parish and 31,902 people in Vernon Parish. The area includes DeRidder, Fort Polk, Leesville, Rosepine and New Llano.

Armes said he was pleased with the outcome after fighting the plan drafted by House Speaker Jim Tucker, R-Terrytown. That plan put him in a district with Rep. Chris Roy, D-Alexandria. Armes said Roy's supporters in Rapides Parish would make it tough to win an election.

"I feel like there's tons and tons of weight off my shoulders," Armes said.

On Monday, House lawmakers narrowly approved an amendment that kept Armes' district in Beauregard and Vernon parishes. But several lawmakers, including Howard and Rep. Rick Nowlin, R-Natchitoches, opposed it. Howard said the measure excluded him from the Zwolle area in Sabine Parish, which makes up a large area of voters that support him.

Howard and Nowlin supported amendments that would have affected Armes' district lines, but withdrew them after compromising on Dixon's amendment.

Dixon's amendment keeps Howard in District 24, which includes Sabine Parish, and the Zwolle area, along with Vernon and Natchitoches parishes.